

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 36

Introduced by Assembly Member Brough

April 20, 2016

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 36—Relative to overflow water.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 36, as introduced, Brough. Overflow water: beneficial use.

This measure would declare that overflow water from reservoirs that are a part of the federal Central Valley Project should be redirected to put the water to the most beneficial use and released in the central valley and that the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta pumping facilities should be put into operation to divert water from being wastefully sent out to the Pacific Ocean and instead sent to areas where the water is critically needed.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The State of California has been experiencing a
2 historic drought, lasting five years; and

3 WHEREAS, During this state-declared drought, California has
4 not seen a full water allocation from the federal government; and

5 WHEREAS, On April 1, 2015, Governor Jerry Brown
6 announced California’s first mandatory statewide water restrictions,
7 requesting a 25-percent decrease in urban water use from 2013
8 levels; and

9 WHEREAS, California is the world’s fifth largest supplier of
10 food, as it grows 43 percent of the nation’s fruit, nuts, and
11 vegetables and more than 90 percent of the nation’s almonds,
12 grapes, and broccoli. With the current drought conditions, farmers’

1 ability to grow crops has been severely affected. In 2014, California
2 farmers were forced to fallow more than 500,000 acres. The central
3 valley is one of the state's most important economic regions, and
4 with the continuance of drought conditions, the economy and
5 agricultural production will continue to suffer; and

6 WHEREAS, Although the El Niño-fueled storms have improved
7 the water levels in some of the state's largest reservoirs, the state's
8 drought persists; and

9 WHEREAS, Under current federal law, the federal Bureau of
10 Reclamation requires a dam to release water when the dam reaches
11 a capacity of 60 percent; that water is known as overflow water.
12 However, there is no guarantee that the reservoirs will reach those
13 water levels again; and

14 WHEREAS, On March 18, 2016, pursuant to the federal Bureau
15 of Reclamation's requirements, Shasta Lake Reservoir, a keystone
16 reservoir of the federal Central Valley Project and California's
17 biggest reservoir that serves California growers, released water at
18 a rate of 20,000 cubic feet per second, a significant increase from
19 the normal rate of 5,000 cubic feet per second. This was the
20 quickest rate the bureau has released water into the upper
21 Sacramento River since 2011; and

22 WHEREAS, Overflow water that is released from the reservoirs
23 and into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta ultimately ends up in
24 the ocean; and

25 WHEREAS, There are more efficient uses of this overflow
26 water; and

27 WHEREAS, More than 23 million Californians and millions of
28 acres of farmland rely on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for
29 all or part of their water supply, and countless species count on
30 the delta for their habitat. Releasing water into the ocean that can
31 otherwise be used in a more efficient and beneficial manner results
32 in damage to the farms and species; now, therefore, be it

33 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
34 *California, jointly*, That the State of California declares that the
35 overflow water from reservoirs that are a part of the federal Central
36 Valley Project, including, but not limited to, Shasta and Folsom
37 Lake Reservoirs, should be redirected to put the water to beneficial
38 use and released in the central valley; and be it further

39 *Resolved*, That the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta pumping
40 facilities should be put into operation to divert the water from

1 being wastefully sent out to the Pacific Ocean and instead sent to
2 areas, such as the central valley and southern California, where
3 the water is critically needed; and be it further
4 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
5 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
6 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
7 Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative
8 from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the
9 author for appropriate distribution.

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